

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Official Action dated December 22, 2006 for the above identified patent application.

Original independent Claim 1 has been cancelled, and new independent Claim 21 has been added. Claims 6, 9, and 12 - 20 have been cancelled, without prejudice, since the features recited in these claims are now included in new independent Claim 21. The form of Claims 3 - 5, 7 - 8, and 10 - 11 have been revised to conform to the replacement of original independent Claim 1 with new independent Claim 21.

Additionally, Claim 3 has been revised to replace the term "means" with "abutments means" to more clearly define the nature of the invention covered by this claim. The expression "such as a flange (13)" has been deleted from Claim 3 and has been included in a new dependent Claim 22.

New independent Claim 21 is supported by the disclosure of this patent application, as originally filed. More specifically, new independent Claim 21 is supported by original Claims 1, 6 and 9 (original claims constitute original disclosure to a patent application), and page 3, lines 21 - 25, and page 6, lines 6 - 14 of the original specification.

At page 2, paragraph 1 of the Official Action, Claims 6, 12 and 13 were rejected under formal grounds as lacking antecedent basis for the recitation "the seat". The formal grounds of rejection of these claims has been rendered moot as a result of the cancellation of these claims, without prejudice.

In the Official Action, Claims 1, 4 and 7 have been rejected as being anticipated by EP 0272233; Claims 1, 4 - 5, 7 - 9, 16 - 17, and 19 - 20 have been rejected as being obvious over EP 0272233 in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,255,070; and Claims 2 - 3, 6, 10 - 11, and 14 - 15 have been rejected as being obvious over EP 0272233, U.S. Patent No. 2,255,070, and either of U.S. Patent Nos. 2,486,113, or 3,027,140. Applicant respectfully submits that the rock bolting system defined by newly added independent Claim 21 is not anticipated by any of the prior art references applied or cited in the Official Action, and is not suggested by any of the prior art references applied or cited in the Official Action or any combination thereof.

Applicant notes that in the outstanding Official Action, no prior art rejections were raised against Claims 12, 13, and 18. The features of these claims are now included in newly added independent Claim 21.

Independent Claim 21 recites a rock bolting system comprising a rock bolt connection unit. The rock bolt connection unit comprises both means for detachable interaction with the

recited expansion means as well as with the suspension element and a supporting sleeve. Applicant respectfully submits that there is no teaching or suggestion of a rock bolting system including both the specific structure and the specific structural arrangement recited in independent Claim 21 in any of the prior art references cited or applied in the Official Action.

The prior art cited by the Patent & Trademark Office does not teach or suggest the rock bolt drilling system defined by newly added independent Claim 21. The cited EP 0 272 233 A1 publication discloses a rock stabilizer expandable by means of a pressure media (Column 2, lines 21 - 46); U.S. Patent No. 4,255,070 discloses a "mono-rail-system" attached to a tunnel ceiling using, for example, an expandable bolt (Column 2, lines 43 - 59); U.S. Patent No. 2,486,113 discloses a threaded hydraulic coupler; U.S. Patent No. 3,027,140 discloses a threaded joint; and WO 2005/119009 A1 discloses a rock bolt expandable by means of a pressure media (See paragraphs 003 and 0023, and Fig. 1 of the drawing). None of these references, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest the rock drilling bolt system defined by independent Claim 21, which now expressly recites a system including a rock bolt connection unit comprising means for detachable interaction with expansion means as well as with a suspension element and a supporting sleeve.

Applicant respectfully submits that the rock bolting system defined by independent Claim 21, when all positively recited

features of this claim are considered in the patentability determination, is patentable over each of the references that were applied or were cited in the Official Action, or any combination thereof.

Enclosed is an Information Disclosure Statement and the fee set forth at 37 C.F.R. 1.17(p). Also enclosed is a copy of U.S. Patent No. 5,997,219.

Applicant submits that U.S. Patent No. 5,997,219 is more relevant to the claims pending in the present United States patent application than the five references cited in the outstanding Official Action. (See Column 1, lines 58 - 62, and Column 2, lines 38 - 46 of the specification of U.S. Patent No. 5,997,219).

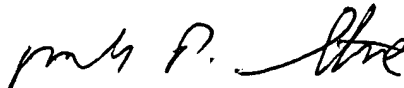
Applicant submits that U.S. Patent No. 5,997,219 does not teach or suggest the rock bolting system as defined by independent Claim 21 in which the rock bolting system comprises a rock bolt connection unit comprising both means for detachable interaction with an expansion means as well as with the suspension element and a supporting sleeve. Moreover, neither U.S. Patent No. 5,997,219, nor any of the prior art references cited or applied in the outstanding Official Action, recognizes the advantages resulting from the structure and structural arrangement of the rock bolting system as defined by independent

Claim 21, as recited in the claim, and as discussed in Applicant's specification.

Applicant respectfully requests that U.S. Patent No. 5,997,219 be formally cited of record in connection with the present patent application as further illustrating the background state of the art.

Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance, and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark P. Stone', is written over the typed name.

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